

Important ISTEP+ Information:

What are academic standards?

The Indiana Academic Standards serve as the framework for instruction in core and other subject areas. The standards are the grade-by-grade written guide for students, parents, teachers, and administrators throughout Indiana. They contain what is expected of students at specific grade levels and in specific subjects.

You may view the Indiana Academic Standards online at www.doe.state.in.us/standards.

Results: what should I expect to receive?

Families of students in Grades 3, 6, and 8 will receive a comprehensive Individual Student Report showing a designation of Pass-Plus, Pass, or Did Not Pass within a short time after the results are received by the school corporation.

Families of Grade 10 students will receive a comprehensive Individual Student Report showing a designation of Pass or Did Not Pass within a short time after the results are received by the school corporation.

In addition, families of students in Grades 3, 6, 8, and 10 are entitled to see a copy of their child's short answer, essay, and performance task responses. Your child's "imaged" work can be obtained from the school.

Families of students in Grades 4, 5, 7, and 9 will receive an Individual Student Report. However, because the Fall 2003 ISTEP+ for Grades 4, 5, 7, and 9 is a statewide trial, the reports will not be as detailed as for the other grade levels.

Reports in Fall 2004 ISTEP+ will be the same at all grade levels.

What is the Individual Student Report?

The ISTEP+ Individual Student Report indicates whether a student passed or did not pass the test. It also contains detailed information about a student's strengths and weaknesses in the subject area.

In addition to student reports, there are classroom, building, corporation, and statewide reports. This provides a way to evaluate curriculum choices, teaching strategies, and program effectiveness. The results provide a wealth of information that help administrators and classroom teachers align what is taught to what is tested.

How can I help my child prepare for ISTEP+?

The best preparation is to provide consistent support to your child throughout his or her education. Read the Indiana Academic Standards. Talk about them with your child. Help make them have meaning to students as they read, write, and do homework.

Have the standards apply to real-life situations. Have your child keep statistics at sporting events. Have your child estimate the cost of your final bill at the grocery store. Have your child write for different purposes and audiences and read as many types of materials as possible.

Maintain an active and positive relationship with your child's teacher and principal.

What can I do to support my child during test administration?

Cramming for a test rarely results in the type of learning that will stay with your child throughout his or her life. Nurture continuous academic growth by staying connected to your child's academic performance throughout the year.

Provide a nutritious breakfast and help ensure your child has plenty of sleep before testing. Encourage your child to do his or her very best, but don't place too much emphasis on the test. The test is another instructional opportunity for your child and should be viewed as such.

What if my child is a student with special needs?

A major goal of educational policymakers is to ensure educational opportunities for all students. It is equally important to measure the real progress of all students in attaining academic standards. Therefore, the participation of students with special needs in ISTEP+ and the inclusion of their scores in related reports is important. While participation of students with disabilities in ISTEP+ assessments will vary for individual students, all students who expect to receive a high school diploma—including students with special needs—are subject to the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) requirements.

Will accommodations be permitted?

Generally, an accommodation is acceptable on ISTEP+, including the GQE, if a student with disabilities uses the accommodation in testing situations that occur throughout the student's education program.

What is an accommodation?

An accommodation is a change in testing materials and procedures (i.e., timing or scheduling, response format, setting or environment, and presentation format) that enables students to participate in assessment in a way that measures their abilities rather than their disabilities. The purpose of testing accommodations is to "level the playing field" or to achieve parity with non-disabled peers in the test-taking situation.

Who is eligible for an "alternate Assessment" ?

In Indiana, nearly every student participates in ISTEP+. Under NCLB, few students (1 percent under proposed regulations) are eligible to participate in an alternate assessment. Limited English Proficient (LEP) students enrolled fewer than three years in schools in the United States also may participate in an alternate assessment. The Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR) is the alternate assessment component in Indiana's statewide system of accountability.

Who can answer questions about ISTEP+?

Your child's classroom teacher, guidance counselor, or principal are all familiar and knowledgeable about ISTEP+. If you need more information please call 1-888-541ISTEP (1-888-544-7837) or visit the ISTEP+ Info Center at www.doe.state.in.us/istep.

INDIANA STATEWIDE TESTING FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

ISTEP+ exams, now administered in Grades 3-10, are based on Indiana's Academic Standards. Copies of these standards are shipped to administrators, teachers, and—most importantly—parents at the start of every school year. The descriptions that follow are brief summaries of what is covered by Indiana's Academic Standards from Kindergarten to graduation. For more details and information, visit www.doe.state.in.us/standards or contact your child's school.

English/language arts standards

—READING

Word recognition, fluency, vocabulary development, concepts, phonemic awareness, decoding, concept development, comprehension, structural features of informational and technical materials, analysis, expository critique, literary response, structural features of literature, narrative analysis, literary criticism

—WRITING

Process, organization and focus, research and technology, evaluation and revision, applications (types and characteristics), English language conventions, handwriting, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, manuscript form

Mathematics standards

Number sense, computation, algebra and functions, geometry, measurement, data analysis and probability, mathematical reasoning, problem solving, equations and inequalities, relations and functions, logarithmic and exponential functions, sequences and series, trigonometry, calculus, probability and statistics, discrete mathematics

Science standards

The nature of science and technology, scientific thinking, physical setting, living environment, mathematical world, common themes, historical perspectives, principles of: biology, chemistry, Earth and space science, environmental science, integrated chemistry, physics



What is ISTEP+?

Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+) is Indiana's test in English/language arts, mathematics, and, for Grade 5 students, science.

Who takes ISTEP+?

ISTEP+ is administered to students in Grades 3 through 10 in English/language arts and mathematics. Students in Grade 5 also participate in a science examination. Grade 7 students will participate in a science examination in 2005.

When will ISTEP+ be given?

ISTEP+ is administered in the fall. Contact your child's school for exact dates or visit www.doe.state.in.us/istep to view the statewide testing "window."

The Grade 10 Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) is given over the course of three days during the ISTEP+ testing window. There are no makeup days for the GQE. Meeting the standards tested on the GQE is a requirement to receive an Indiana high school diploma. Students who do not pass the test their sophomore year may retest as juniors, fall and spring, and as seniors, fall and spring.

For more detailed information on the GQE go to www.doe.state.in.us/publications/gradexam00.html, contact your local high school, or call 1-888-54ISTEP (1-888-544-7837).

How long does ISTEP+ take to administer?

The test takes from 4 to 6.5 hours, depending on the grade level. Generally, the test can be administered in three mornings.

What does it measure?

ISTEP+ measures a student's mastery of the Indiana Academic Standards from previous grade levels. If your child is in Grade 3, he or she will be tested on K - 2 standards in English/language arts and mathematics. You could receive a copy of the Indiana Academic Standards each year from your school to help you understand what your child is expected to learn and what is tested.

Why do we test?

Testing is an instructional opportunity for students. It gives students valuable experience in showing what they know. Testing serves both as a diagnostic tool and an accountability measure. Students who do not pass ISTEP+ are entitled to extra instructional time and help to overcome the areas of weakness the test results identify.

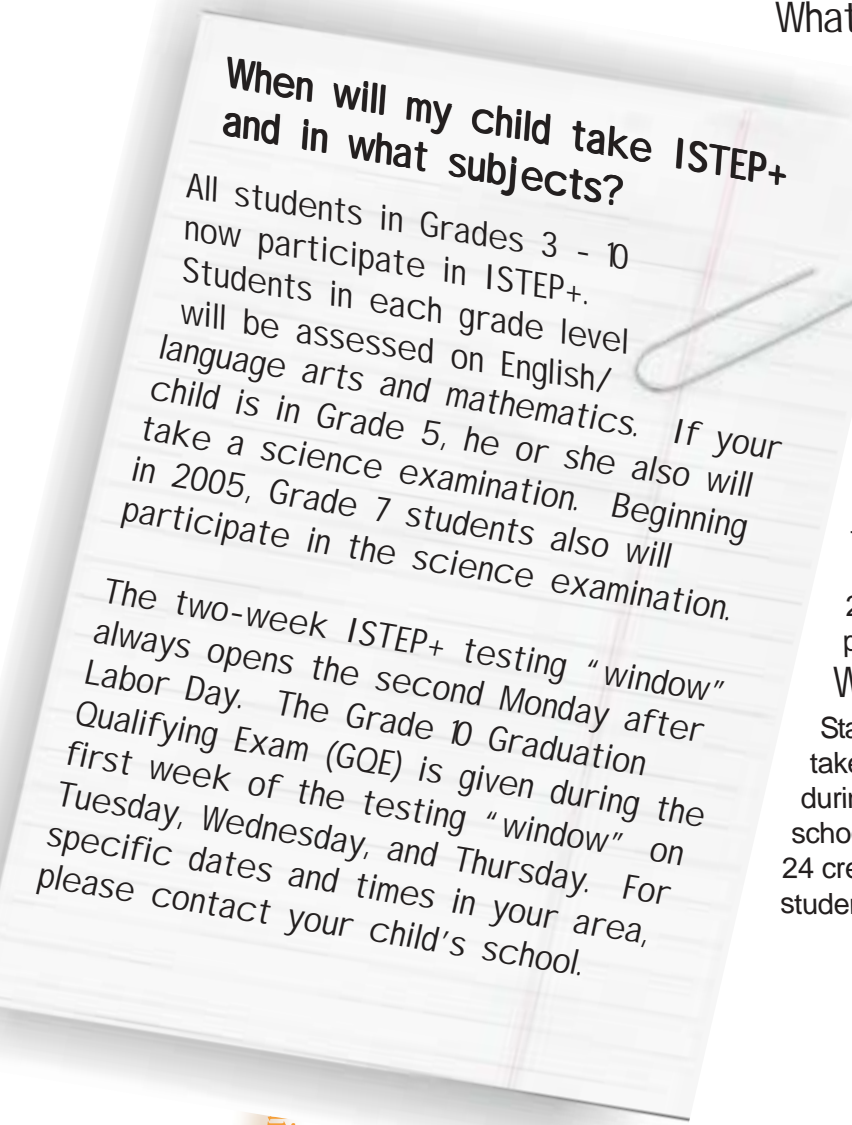
Student results are the funding mechanism for the Remediation/Prevention Grant Program and high school remediation funding. The funding is distributed to school corporations to help pay for extra help to those students who are in jeopardy of failing ISTEP+ or who have already failed the test.

In today's society, a world-class K - 12 education holds increasing importance for each and every student. In Indiana, ISTEP+ helps assure that students are being taught what has been identified as absolutely essential for them to know and be able to do.

As an accountability measure, ISTEP+ results will determine schools' category placements under Public Law 221 (P.L. 221) and help Indiana meet the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). Results also provide stakeholders with important information.

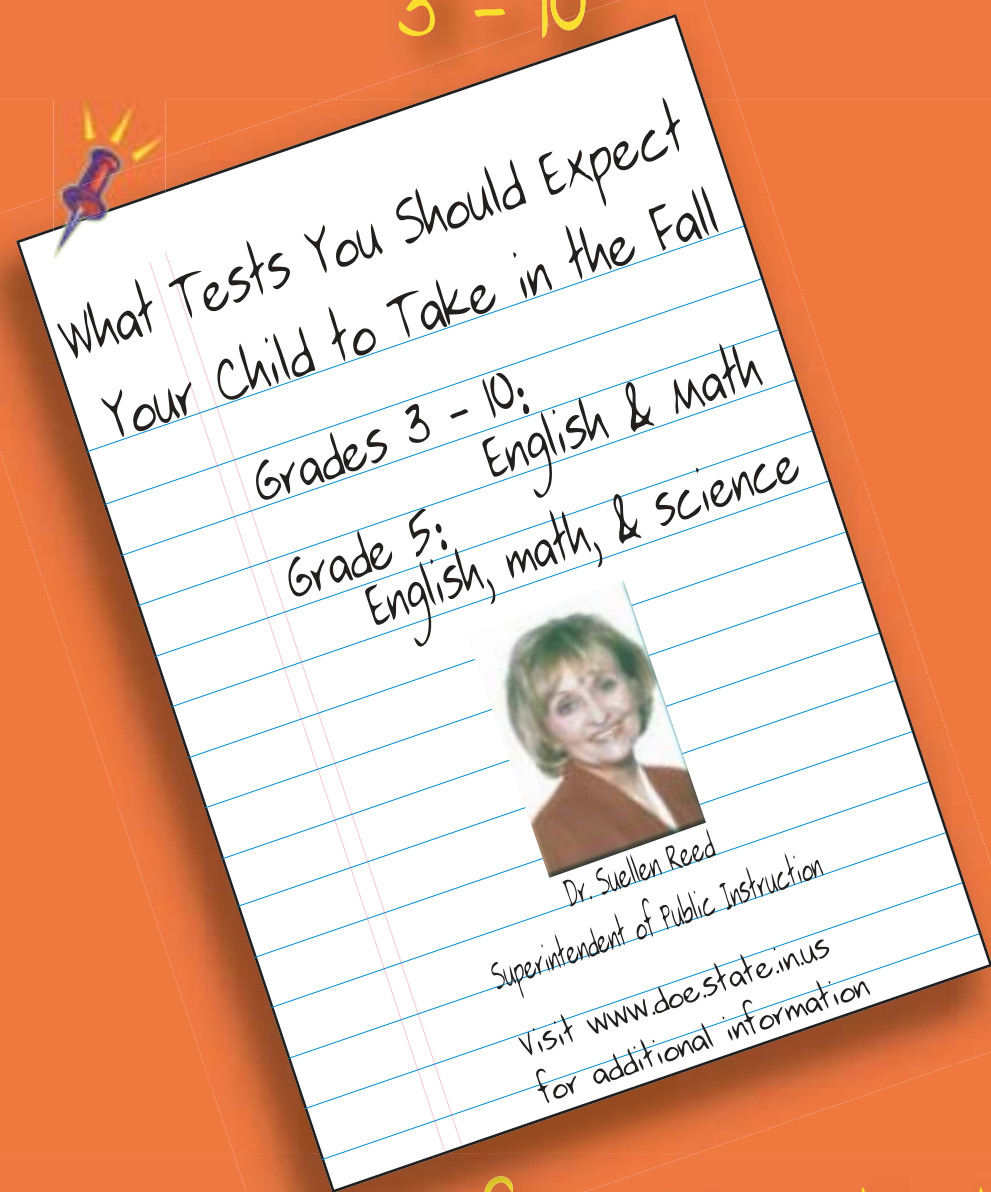
What if my child doesn't pass the Grade 10 GQE?

State law provides that a student may graduate without passing the GQE if the student has: taken the GQE in the subject area(s) in which the student did not achieve a passing score at least one time every year during his or her sophomore, junior, and senior years in high school; completed remediation opportunities provided by the school; maintained a high school attendance rate of 95 percent; maintained a "C" average in the courses that make up the 24 credits required for graduation; obtained a written recommendation supporting the request for the appeal from the student's teacher(s) in the subject area(s) in which the student has not achieved a passing score.



Indiana Department of Education
Room 229, State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Parents of Students in Grades 3 - 10



Look Inside for Important ISTEP+ Information.

- *Indiana's large-scale assessment program, Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+), has been **shortened by 37 percent** from 1997-2002 and the **turn-around time for receiving results has been shortened 45 percent** from 1997-2002.*
- *Indiana was one of only **five states** to receive early approval under The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 in a White House ceremony. Indiana's plan was approved in large measure because of our excellent academic standards, **ISTEP+**, and our state's accountability system.*
- *ISTEP+ contains multiple-choice and short answer questions in English and mathematics and essay questions in English and reading comprehension as well as performance tasks in mathematics.*
- ***ISTEP+ at Grades 3 through 10 is aligned to Indiana's Academic Standards that are the best in the country.** The new passing scores (known as cut scores) for ISTEP+ were established by the Indiana State Board of Education in early **2003**, upon a recommendation by the Indiana Education Roundtable. This benchmark data serve as the first step in implementing ISTEP+ in Grades 3 through 8, as required under federal legislation. Keeping the test in the fall ensures our continued compliance with federal regulations and our entitlement to over \$500 million in federal funding for Indiana's K - 12 education system.*
- *ISTEP+ is designed specifically for Indiana students. The test reflects Indiana's Academic Standards in English/language arts, mathematics, and science. Indiana teachers use these standards as teaching guides.*
- *ISTEP+ tests what students are doing in their classes and gives students a clear understanding of what they are expected to know and be able to do. When provided with this information, students have the opportunity to perform their best.*
- *ISTEP+ provides feedback for students, families, and teachers through detailed score reports. These reports give a clear picture of how well students are meeting Indiana's Academic Standards. This information enables educators to help all students reach the standards necessary for success in school, the workplace, college, and lifelong learning.*
- *ISTEP+ provides important information for school systems to determine if they have developed effective educational programs. In this way, the statewide assessment program can help your child's school improve.*
- *By connecting student learning, classroom instruction, school improvement, and state educational goals, ISTEP+ is an important way to make sure your child is in academic shape for the future and the rewards and challenges it offers.*

Web sites that can provide you with more information include:

ISTEP+ Info Center:
www.doe.state.in.us/istep

Indiana Academic Standards:
www.doe.state.in.us/standards

Indiana State Board of Education:
www.doe.state.in.us/stateboard

Indiana's Education Roundtable
www.edroundtable.state.in.us

Indiana Accountability System for Academic Progress
www.doe.state.in.us/asap

Spanish versions of this document are available online:
www.doe.state.in.us/publications